2

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SHEWING

Man his Duty,

AND

Pointing him to the Principle of God in his heart, which is the root of Life in all Diſpenſations; and which, being kept to, is able to bear the fruit of life in every diſpenſation.

As alſo,

Some Queſtions and Anſwers concerning the Seed of *Jacob*, and the true CHURCH.

By *ISAAC PENNINGTON.*

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QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

SHEWING

What is Duty,

AND

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The Preface

THE goodneſs of God endureth for ever. And though his creature Man (who ſhould have been ſubject and obedient to him) hath ſinned againſt him, and by motions and inclinations of his own will and wiſdom (out of the Principle of his pure Life; which was to have been his Guide and Governor) hath fallen ſhort of his glory; Yet he ſtill pleaſeth to viſit his poor loſt creature with loving-kindneſs and mercy, and with various diſpenſations of his life, according to his pleaſure. What man is there, that hath not received a ſoul from the breath of the Almighty? And what ſoul is it, that hath not ſome viſitations of life from that living breath? The bow-

bowels of Eternity moſt naturally rowle towards all its off-ſpring, who ſeekerh the gathering of them all in the variety, and according to the limitations of his Will, in his pure Wiſdom.

There is a Current or Stream of Life before the Promiſe is known, which ſecretly viſits all, diſcovering the darkneſs in ſome meaſure unto all, and drawing from it. And happy is he, who falls in with, and follows the leadings of the Almighty here: for then he cannot abide in the darkneſs, but (ſtill according to the need of his condition) wil meet with a true guide out of it, and with the true Power which redeemeth and delivereth from it. For as the promiſe made to *Adam*, had relation to all his poſterity: ſo whoever is viſited with any Light by virtue of the promiſe, that Light will lead him to the promiſe, and he (in the obedience thereof) will meet with the

ſweetneſs

ſweetneſs and vertue of the promiſe. So that the loweſt diſpenſation of God (the Creature being exerciſed therein, feeling the want of God's Power, and drawn to depend upon him for mercy and ſtrength) will lead fallen man back again to his Maker, by the vertue which flows into man from the promiſe; though never ſo ſecretly and hiddenly. For it is not the diſtinct knowledge of the promiſe (though that is a very great advantage) but the vertue flowing from the promiſe, which ſaves. Man being touched by that vertue, and by the touch thereof quickened towards God, and in that vertue which comes from the redeeming mercy, cleaving to his Maker, and hoping in his tender bowels, and feeling the weakneſſe, inſufficiency and corruption of his own will and underſtanding, and ſo going forth from himſelf towards the Spring which quickened him: Here is Chriſt

known in ſpirit, received in ſpirit, believed and relied on in ſpirit, and his living vertue already felt and further waited for. And can this man, thus walking, thus believing, thus obeying, thus cleaving to the Principle which gives life, thus receiving vertue from it, and growing up (in that virtue) out of the ſelfe-hood into it, I ſay, Can this man miſs of eternal life which runs along in all the ſtreamings forth of this living virtue?

But O how ſweet is the ſtream of life in the ſenſible manifeſtation of the promiſe! He who feels the Covenant in Chriſt, and life ſtreaming into his heart through the Covenant, and the ſeal of Eternal Peace to his ſoul, and that he ſhall never be left nor forſaken by the Fountain of Mercy, but all that ever befalls him, ſhall conduce towards the working out of the perfect redemption and ſalvation of his ſoul: This

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is a precious ſtate indeed; and this is the ſtate, which the ſeeling of the faith, and the living obedience in the ſpirit leads to. Happy are they that walk in the path thereof, who content not themſelves with man's knowledge of Chriſt, with man's belief of the things written concerning him, with man's obedience to the Precepts left on Record by the Apoſtles; but whoſe living ſoul cannot be ſatisfied, without the feeling and preſſing after Chriſt the life, and without a true engrafting into him in ſpirit, through the living Word or Teſtimony of life received into, and believed on in the heart.

And how ſweet alſo is the Miniſtration of the Law, which comes from the Promiſe, and is managed to the ſoul by the hand of the Mediator! How ſweet is it to ſee the creature fall daily! To find ones own ſtrength to believe, to obey, to

ſuffer, to abide with Chriſt, to wait on Chriſt, to hope for Chriſt, daily battered and brought to nothing, and no life left, but what iſſues from the Spring, and is alone maintained by the free Current thereof into the heart daily! Here the ſtroke of the Law is received, by degrees unto perfect death. Here are the openings of the pure Propheſies in the Spirit concerning a new Kingdom, a new Birth, a new Heir, a new Life. Here is the Ax laid to the root of the Tree, and that cut down in the heart which is not to live, and which hinders the Heir from his Inheritance. Here is the vale of tears, which tears ſpring from the life, whoſe virtue waſheth away the corruptible day by day. Here is the houſe of Mourning, and that ſtate of darkneſs entered into, which ſwallows up all the joy of the dark earthly ſpirit, and conſumes its nature. Here the

light

light of life is ſown, and through theſe exerciſes it ſprings up; and after the paſſing away of this Miniſtration, breaks forth in ſtrength upon that ſoul, which hath been throughly exerciſed herein.

I deſire the good of all mankind, waiting for the ſwallowing up of the diſpenſations of death, and the breaking forth of life upon them in the ſeaſons thereof, according to the good pleaſure of him whoſe gift life is, and whoſe are all the diſpenſations of it. And in that love, through the openings and drawings of life in me, have I writ what follows: not to upbraid or ſtrike at any, but to be an help unto ſuch, as the Lord ſhall pleaſe to make it ſerviceable to. Wait on the Lord, eye him, read in fear, praying to be touched by, and gathered into that, which gives the feeling of the weight of truth. O that mens ſouls were awakened, that they might know what it is to periſh from

from God, and what to be saved by him. The proper portion of man's soul is the Fountain of Eternal Life, and he can never be happy (nor in true rest, peace or joy) while separated from it. Let him who is not brutish in understanding, and whose soul is not wholly dead God-wards, consider this.

Some

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Some Questions and Answers shewing man his duty, &c.

Queſt. WHat is the proper work of man here in this world?

Anſ. To fear God, and keep his Commandments. This is all that God requires of him, and this is enough to make him happy.

Queſt. *What is God?*

Anſ. The Fountain of Beings and Natures, the inward Subſtance of all that appears, who createth, upholdeth, conſumeth and bringeth to nothing as he pleaſeth.

Queſt. *How may I know that there is a God?*

Anſ. By ſinking down into the Principle of his own life, wherein he reveaſeth himſelf to the creature. There the ſoul receiveth ſuch taſts and knowledge

of

of him, as cannot be queſtioned by him that abideth there.

Queſt. *What is it to fear this God?*

Anſ. The ſpirit and ſoul of the creature ſtanding in awe of his Nature, and waiting to be kept in due ſubjection thereto, this is to fear him. And this is the proper means of preſerving the Spirit of the creature right in its motio is towards him, attendance upon him, and expectations from him.

Queſt. *What are his Commandments?*

Anſ. They are ſuch as are either general to all mankind, common to ſome ſorts of men, or proper to particular perſons.

Queſt. *What are thoſe which are general to all mankind?*

Anſ. They are very many, but may all be referred to thoſe two heads, to wit, *To love God above all, and one's neighbour as one's ſelf* even ſo in every reſpect doing to him as one would be done to by him in the like caſe.

Queſt. *How may man perform theſe?*

Anſ. Onely by receiving a principle of life from God, and keeping cloſe thereto.

Queſt.

Qu. *How may a man come by a Principle of Life from God?*

Anſ. God is near to every man with the breath of his life, breathing upon him at times according to his pleaſure, which man's ſpirit opening unto, and drinking in, it becometh a Seed or Principle of Life in him, overſpreading and leavening him up to eternal life?

Queſt. *What hinders man from receiving this Principle of Life, and from keeping cloſe thereto?*

Anſ. A fleſhly Principle, which is contrary to the knowledge, fear and obedience of the Lord, and to all that ſprings from the Principle and Power of his Life.

Queſt. *How comes this fleſhly Principle to be found in man?*

Anſ. It was ſown there by the enemy of mans ſoul, man giving him entrance into his ſpirit, by hearkening to his ſuggeſtions and allurements.

Queſt. *What help hath man againſt this fleſhly Principle?*

Anſ. None of himſelf: but being touched freely by the other Principle, and taſting thereof, he is to wait on God's mercy and grace, for the manifeſtation

ſeſtation of his light and power, to diſcover to him the evil nature and courſe of his own heart, and to cut down the corrupt deſires, reaſonings and imaginations thereof?

Queſt. *In what way it this effected upon the heart?*

Anſ. In the hearts belief of this Principle, and in its obedience thereto.

Queſt. *How may a man come to believe in this Principle?*

Anſ. In feeling its nature, in waiting to feel ſomewhat begotten by it: in this its light ſprings, its life ſprings, its love ſprings, its hidden power appears, and its preſerving wiſdom and goodneſs is made manifeſt to the ſoul that clings to it in the living ſence, which its preſence and appearance begets in the ſoul.

Queſt. *How may a man come to obey this Principle?*

Anſ. In the Faith, in the eying of it, in the clinging to it, the ſtrength iſſues from it into the creature, which maketh it able to perform all that it calleth for.

Queſt. *How come perſons to be ſo weak, and to complain ſo much for want of power,*

how

who feel a true beginning of life, and earneſt breathings after God?

Anſ. From the enemies interpoſing of reaſonings between them and their Faith. The darkneſs, the principle of unbelief lies near, and is ſtill raiſing mud (as much as poſſible) between the Principle of Life and the ſoul: and ſo far as it can come between, it diſturbeth both the motions of the ſoul towards its ſpring or principle of life, and alſo the ſprings clear bubling up in, and running through the ſoul.

Queſt. *What is to be done in this caſe?*

Anſ. The ſoul is to wait God's ſeaſons of deliverance from theſe, and to hope for an hidden ſupport from his Grace, while the viſitations and leadings of his life are not made manifeſt.

Queſt. *What ground is there for this hope?*

Anſ. There is ground of hope for the creature in God's goodneſs, who naturally loveth and ſeeketh after the ſouls which he hath made, and doth not readily nor eaſily caſt off in any of his diſpenſations. Beſides, where he hath begotten ſomewhat, and where the bent of the heart is towards him,

and

and the desire after his pure life and spirit (above all things) kindled; there hath he laid the foundation of a building, which (though at present it may lie in the dust, and under heaps of ruines) he cannot forget.

Quest. *Are there other Commands besides these, common to some sorts of men?*

Ans. Yes, according to that dispensation of life and mercy unto which they are called, and into which they are admitted by the love and kindness of God, which overspreadeth all his works, and who forgetteth not his creatures in their estate of separation and alienation from him.

Quest. *Are there then more dispensations of life and mercy than one?*

Ans. Yes. For though the life and mercy in it self is but one, yet it hath several waies of seeking out after, and gathering into it self the lost sons of *Adam*.

Quest. *What have been the chief waies of dispensing the Light of Life towards mankind?*

Ans. First, By a secret shining into their hearts. Thus the soul of the Lord holdeth forth some beams of his eternal

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nal Light to all mankind, according to his pleasure, at some time or other visiting the darkest corners of the earth, and making some way therein for the scattering of that darkness which separates the soul from the Light of Life, and from the sweet presence and enjoyment of its Creator, which naturally flows in to every soul in its believing and obeying of that Light.

Quest. *Were ever any thus gathered to the Lord?*

Ans. The Lord is able to make any Dispensation of his life effectual. And as many of the Jews were not gathered by the Law: so, many of the Gentiles might be gathered without the Law.

Quest. *But the Law gave the knowledge of the Messiah to come through faith, in whom was the remission of sins known, and strength against sin?*

Ans. The knowledge of Christ runs along in all the Dispensations of the Eternal Light. The Light cometh from him, and it manifests him in spirit, and the remission by his blood is spiritually known in the souls feeling the living virtue thereof. The Law and the Go-

ſpel are both known in ſpirit, where-ever the eternal Light viſiteth and is received.

Queſt. *What are the Commands common to thoſe?*

Anſ. They are known to thoſe who are thus gathered, who in the life thus diſpenſed feel the leadings of it, and in its Light are ſenſible of thoſe requirings, which univerſally ſtream forth from it among thoſe who are thus gathered.

Queſt. *What other way of diſpenſing the Light of Life hath there been?*

Anſ. That of the promiſe to the Fathers, which was before the Law, wherein they ſaw the day of the Meſſiah, and were glad. This was a glorious Diſpenſation, in which they taſted the Son-ſhip, and felt power to walk with God, and faith to truſt him in his leadings, and were tranſlated by him (in a ſweet and precious degree) into the meaſure of his Life, which made them Pilgrims and ſtrangers in this World, and ſteered their ſpirits towards another Countrey.

Queſt. *What were the Commands common to theſe?*

Anſ. They were ſeen by them in the ſtreamings forth of that Diſpenſation of Life among them, a taſte whereof the quickened ſpirit may have, in reading the words concerning them up and down the Scriptures.

Queſt. *What farther diſpenſation of life hath there been?*

Anſ. That of the Law to the *Jews.*

Queſt. *Was that a Miniſtration of life? was it not rather a Miniſtration of death and condemnation?*

Anſ. It proved ſo in its effect through the weakneſs of their ſtate: but its natural tendency and proper effect, in caſe of obedience thereto, was life. And alſo in the midſt of its adminiſtring death and condemnation, it pointed to him who was the juſtification and the life: inſomuch as the Law was kind to them in ſlaying them, and ſerviceable to the life of ſuch ſouls, as kindly received the ſtroke thereof, and fled to the hope ſet before them.

Qu. *What were the common Laws [a]mongst these?*

Anſ. They are to be read in the writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets, wherein God's Law and Teſtimonies were abundantly given forth to that people.

Qu. *Have there been yet any further Diſpenſations of life?*

Anſ. Yes, that of the Goſpel, before the Apoſtacy and falling away from the living truth and power of the ſpirit, into man's wiſdom, inventions and imitations.

Queſt. *What were the Laws common to theſe?*

Anſ. They may be read in the Writings of the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles, where the Record of this Miniſtration is to be found.

Queſt. *What hath the Miniſtration of Life been ſince the Apoſtles days?*

Anſ. Very low, very weak, very dark, very hidden, exceedingly retired. Yet true Children have been begotten, and food hath been handed to them from the Father, and they have been nouriſhed up in the Faith, and have kept the Commandments of

their

their day, and dyed in the Faith: And those who have thus been led and preserved, their souls are at rest, and in the peace of God. But these have not been in any particular distinct gathering, and clear separation out of the world, but scattered up and down in several mistaken forms, and loaded with the inventions of the earthly wisdome, and with the bondage and weight of corruption, not knowing that clearness of spirit, and victory over sin, by the presence of the Life, which was felt and enjoyed by the Christians before the apostacy.

Quest. *Had these any common Commandments?*

Ans. Not so distinctly as the former: for they lying in an heap of Confusion, in a Wilderness or Chaos, scattered in the Mysts and Fogs of Antichristian darkness one from another, had not such common beams of Light, or clear streams of life running among them, as those that had a more distinct gathering. Yet some testimony for God and against the corruption of the times, according to what was in their day and age to be testified for and a-

gainſt, did run among every ſort (of ſuch as were true-hearted) in ſome kind or other. And for this they were hated and perſecuted by men (even by ſuch as were formal, and of another ſpirit) and alſo dearly tendered and beloved of the Lord.

Qu. Hath there been any further diſpenſation of life ſince the Apoſtacy?

Anſ. There is another begun, whoſe glory is to exceed the former, after the darkneſs (which overſpread and clouded the beauty of the former) is expelled by the growing brightneſs of this appearance.

Qu. How may it appear that there is another?

Anſ. There is no knowing this diſpenſation, but by being gathered into the Light of it. Wiſdom hath been alone juſtified of her Children in former ages, and ſhe can be juſtified by none elſe, in her appearance in this age.

Qu. What is the difference of this from the former?

Anſ. It is more inward, more retired, more cloſely depending upon the principle of Life in the Spirit, than the former.

Qu. *Is it then the same in substance?*

Ans. Yes; the very same. The very same truth of Christ Jesus, the very same building of God in the spirt, the very same Church is to be again brought forth: but in greater glory, that being now to be left out whereby the Enemy then entered, and also degrees of beauty, strength and perfection, being to be added.

Qu. *But surely a greater glory than that in the Apostles dayes is not to be expected, nay it is not the belief of many that ever that shall be restored?*

Ans. This ariseth from the unbelief, and want of the sight of the thing by the right eye in the true Light. For the travel of the Eternal Spirit in its Dispensations, is towards perfection: and after the darkness of Antichrist, the brightness of the Light of Life is to shine more clear than ever, as is abundantly testified in the Scriptures (especially in the Book of the *Revelations*) and also seen by many in the clear openings of the same Eternal Spirit.

Qu. *Are there any common Commands given forth in this Dispensation?*

Anſ. Yes, unto all who are gathered into the Spirit of it. They all feel the ſame common commands unto ſeveral things, according to the nature and drift of this Diſpenſation.

Qu. What are they?

Anſ. They are many, and concern many things (to wit, their meetings to worſhip and wait on the Lord, who hath viſited and gathered them, together with their way of worſhipping, as alſo their converſe and converſation amongſt men, &c.) which are not eaſily ſpecified: neither indeed are they fit to be held forth to man's diſputing wiſdom, but to be waited for in the Spirit, where the light of them is evident, and the ſtrength to perform them received and held.

Queſt. But how may men know that theſe are true Commands of the Lord, and not imaginations or opinions of their own?

Anſ. When the Principle of Life is known, and that, which God hath begotten, felt in the heart; the diſtinction between what God opens and requires there, and what ſprings up in mans

mans wisdom, reason and imagination, is very manifest.

Qu. Are there particular Commands to particular persons, besides these?

Ans. As every heart hath its own particular state, which is onely fully known to the Spirit of the Lord, who is the Leader of the soul out of its darkness and captivity, and the Exerciser of it in what he judgeth proper to its present state; so the Lord giveth out particular Commands as he pleaseth, either to do or forbear such a thing, as he judgeth it necessary for the soul.

Qu. How may these be known?

Ans. By coming into acquaintance with the Lord, and the movings and voice of his Spirit. First, the quickenings of the Spirit of the Lord are to be received into the heart: then the eye fixed, in that which is quickened, on him that quickened it, and all the inward senses waiting upon him, and exercised towards him. Thus the sheep come to know the voice of the Shepherd, and to follow his leadings into the Pastures of Life, and out of the pathes and feedings of Death, and is drawn on by him towards any thing, or stopt by him from any thing at his pleasure.

O that the sons of men knew their God, and were gathered into any living dispensation by him, wherein they might have the true sence and seeking of him. O that mens souls were awakened to feel the want of the breath of life from whence they came. O that the Seed of Israel were redeemed by their God, that their glory and beauty in his pure life might awaken the Nations. O God, hasten thy work in the world; bring the glory and wisdom of man into contempt, and bring forth thine own glory and wisdom in its pure brightness.

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Some Queſtions and Anſwers concerning the Seed of Iſrael *and the true Church.*

Queſt. WHo *are the Seed of Iſrael?*

Anſ. They who are begotten of the Spirit and Nature of the Eternal Father and Fountain of Life, out of the ſpirit and nature of this World.

Qu. Are there ſuch a ſeed in the earth?

Anſ. Yea, and have always been, who have ſtil been the bleſſing of this world, though conſtantly hated and perſecuted by it.

Qu. Why are they hated by the world?

Anſ. Becauſe they are not of the World, but faithful Witneſſes againſt it, teſtifying unto it, that its wayes are evil, and its end miſery.

Qu. Why do they thus teſtifie?

Anſ.

Anſ. It is their nature, and God calleth them thereunto. He hath ſet up his Light in their hearts, to ſhine forth in the World, and ſcatter the darkneſs.

Queſt. How do they ſcatter the darkneſs? doth not the darkneſs rather ſcatter them?

Anſ. The darkneſs doth indeed often prevail againſt them outwardly, hunting and ſcattering them up and down upon the face of the earth: but they ſtill prevail inwardly, in the teſtimony of mens Conſciences, over the darkneſs, who at one time or other, are generally made to acknowledge in the ſecrets of their hearts, that they are of God?

Qu. Why doth the Lord ſuffer it to be thus, that that which is precious, and of him, ſhould be trodden under foot by that which is not of him?

Anſ. The Lord hath his ſeaſons for the diſcovery of all things. He hath given the Kingdom of Darkneſs its time and power to reign over the Juſt, and to keep the holy Seed in bondage and captivity; and he hath alſo appointed his ſuffering Seed its ſeaſon of ſuffering

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in all ages and generations. And by these, and through these the nature of each is discovered, their ends, and their suitableness to their ends.

Qu. But shall this holy Seed always suffer in this world?

Ans. Nay, not so: for the Lord hath a day to raise the Just into dominion over the unjust, even here in this world.

Qu. When shall this be?

Ans. When the malice and persecutions of the Enemies of the pure Seed are filled up, and the measure of its sufferings finished.

Qu. Where are this Seed?

Ans. They are (as yet, for the generality) scattered up and down under the face of the whole Heaven. Not to be found in a visible body gathered together, but scattered up and down, here a few, and there a few; here one, and there another.

Qu. Were they then once in a body?

Ans. Yea, they were once embodied: for after God had cast off the natural Seed, the *Jews*, he gathered the spiritual Seed into a Body, setting them as a City on a Hill, and making them to be Light of the world.

Qu.

Queſt. *How came they afterwards to be ſcattered?*

Anſ. The Dragon hath done this; God ſuffering him many wayes to aſſault this Building, and ſo far at length to prevail over it, even to ſcatter his Church out of her built ſtate; into a Wilderneſs ſtate, where no eye can diſcern her any more, but that which is of God. (Wait to read *Rev.* 12. in the Light of that Spirit which wrote it.)

Queſt. *Why did God ſuffer the Dragon to prevail over ſo precious and glorious a Building?*

Anſ. Becauſe there was ſomewhat of the power of darkneſs neceſſary to be made manifeſt, which could not be otherwiſe ſo made manifeſt, as by this its prevailing: and alſo that he might ſhew the neceſſity of, and make way for the bringing forth of that, over which the power of darkneſs cannot prevail.

Qu. *Is there then ſuch a thing to be brought forth?*

Anſ. Yea. There is a Church, there is a Spiritual building againſt which the Gates of Hell can never prevail, which

is ſo united to the Rock, as the Powers of darkneſs can by no means come between the Rock and it.

Qu. *Is this Church, and the Church in the Apoſtles dayes different, or the ſame?*

Anſ. This Church hath been in all ages, but a more full and perfect bringing forth in the Apoſtles dayes, than in any age before: yet not ſuch a bringing forth outwardly, as might not be driven back. And therefore did the Lord ſuffer it to be aſſaulted and prevailed over, in that wherein it was weak through the outwardneſs of it, that (after many dayes) he might manifeſt his ſtrength in bringing it forth more perfectly.

Qu. *Where hath this Church been theſe many ages, ſince the Dragons ſore aſſault and overcoming it, as to its outwardneſs?*

Anſ. In the Wilderneſs, *Rev.* 12.

Qu. *What Wilderneſs? any viſible, outward Wilderneſs?*

Anſ. It is a parable, repreſenting the ſcattered ſtate of the Seed, after God's preſence was withdrawn from the viſible building, and it laid waſt as to his life,

life, and the appearances of his Spirit, and the Dragon got into, and seated in the form, (2 *Thess.* 2. 4) then the seed and appearances of God were to be found elsewhere, and not in those buildings.

Quest. *How were those Churches, or Buildings in the Apostles dayes, laid waste?*

Ans. The presence of the Life and Power makes the form living: and no longer is it, or can it be so, than the Life and Power remains with it. Now they not abiding in the Life and in the Power (the Apostasy coming, spoken of 2 *Thess.* 2. 3.) the Life and the Power also withdrew from them, and left them the dead form, into which the Prince of Death immediately enters: and so that which was a Church unto God, while the life abode there, and they in the life, becomes a Synagogue of Satan, he entering into the dead form, and being worshipped there in the dead form. So that it is not any outward gathering or profession that makes a Church under the New-Testament, but onely the life and power. That gathering which is in the Life and

Pow-

Power is a true Church: that which is not, is a Synagogue of Satan, let them profess what they will. For the living God dwels in living Temples onely, and the Prince of Death dwells in all the territories of death.

Quest. *According to this Rule there are, or have been few true Churches of God in the World, since the dayes of the Apostles.*

Ans. The true Church hath been in a Wilderness state since the days of the Apostles. A scattered Seed have her Children been; and she a Widow forsaken, God providing a place for the inward part of his Building, and giving up the outward part to the formal spirit, to the possession of the powers of Darkness. Read *Rev.* 11 1, 2. The Lord by the withdrawing of his Spirit took down his own Building, gave up the outward Court to the Gentiles, removed the inward Temple, Altar and Worshippers into the Wilderness. And since that time, men have built many Buildings, in the imitation of that which God built (every sort according to their skill, and reasonings of

their Wisdom about the thing) but they are not the same Building. But the true Building, the true Church is reproached by all these Builders, and not known to be the thing, because hid from their eye.

Qu. *When shall this true Church appear again?*

Ans. When God, who gave her the wings of an Eagle to flye into the Wilderness, bringeth her the same Wings again, to flye out. Then shall she come forth cloathed with the Sun again, and with the Moon under her feet, and with her Crown of Stars.

Qu. *How may it appear, that those present Buildings which are to be found in the world, are not true Churches?*

Ans. Because they are built by men, and their strength stands not in the demonstration and power of the Spirit, but in the wisdom and power of man. Take away that, they soon crumble and molder of themselves. Besides, they are not cloathed with the Sun, have not the Moon under their feet, nor know not the travel to bring forth the Man-child, which the true

Church

Church knows, even in the Wilderness.

Qu. *Why do men keep up such Buildings, and not rather mourn after the true Building of God, which is built and preserved in the light and power of his Spirit?*

Anſ. Antichriſt's time is not yet fully ended, nor the myſts wherewith he blinds mens eyes ſcattered, nor the Cup of his Fornications (which makes every one drunk and beſotted, as to the ſight and knowledge of the true Church, which drinks of it) taken from mens lips.

Qu. *How may I know the true Church?*

Anſ. By being born of God's Spirit, and looking with that eye which he gives to thoſe whom he begets, in that Light of Life which ſhineth from his preſence: Here his holy Church and true Spouſe is diſcerned and diſtinguiſhed from all falſe reſemblances and vain pretenders.

Qu. *Are there then many reſemblances of the true Church, and pretenders to be ſuch, which are not ſo indeed?*

Anſ. Yes. There is the Mother of Harlots, *Revel.* 17. 5. and her many

daughters, all which pretend to be the true Churches of Christ, but want that life in themselves, and that Union in Spirit with him, which alone can make such.

Qu. *What makes a true Church?*

Ans. That alone which makes a spiritual body, and which unites that body to the Head. There must be a true nature, and the union of that nature to the Head, or there cannot be a Marriage in spirit to the Lamb. Now the true Church is Christ's Spouse, *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*; as truly of the seed of *Abraham* after the spirit, as the *Jews* were after the flesh. And as he that saith he is a *Jew*, but wanteth the true circumcision of the heart and spirit, doth but lye, and is not indeed so. So they that say they are a Church, but want the nature of the Church, they also lye, and are not a true gathering of Christians out of the world, but a Synagogue of Satan, still abiding and worshipping in the spirit of the world. (*Rev.* 2. 9. & ch. 3. 9.)

Qu. *May not the true Church be known by outward visible marks, as most persons de-*

ſcribe and ſeek to find and diſtinguiſh her by?

Anſ. No, not poſſibly in her Wilderneſs-ſtate, nor hardly in her built-ſtate.

Queſt. *Why not poſſibly in her Wilderneſs ſtate?*

Anſ. Becauſe there ſhe is ſtripped of them, and the Hirlots or falſe Churches are cloathed with them. Mark the thing: In the very Apoſtles dayes, the falſe Miniſters and falſe Chriſtians got into the form, and denied the power, 2 *Tim.* 3 5. Now after a ſeaſon God leaves the form to them (*Revel.* 11. 2) gathering his Church out of that appearance into the hidden power. Here is the Wilderneſs into which the Church fled; the Life, the Power, which before appeared in the form, being withdrawn and ſeparated from the form, and the living Seed gathered into it, and worſhipping in it. And who can now find the Church, or learn the Worſhip? Here the eye of the Seed is tried, and the Wiſdom of the Spirit of the true Diſciple. And here, ever

ſince, all the World have been jangling about the Form, while the true Witneſſes have been mourning after the Power, teſtifying concerning the Power, and enjoying what was to be given forth of it, in the preſent way of its dipenſation in the Wilderneſſe.

Queſt. *Why hardly in her built ſtate?*

Anſ. Becauſe even then ſuch variety of reſemblances and likeneſſes of the true Church may be built, as cannot be diſtinguiſhed from the true it ſelf by any outward marks. There were in the Apoſtles dayes falſe Apoſtles, falſe Miniſters and falſe Churches; which though they appeared as the Apoſtles of Chriſt, as the Miniſters of Righteouſneſs, as the Churches of Chriſt; yet they were not ſo, but *falſe Apoſtles, deceitful workers*, and *Synagogues of Satan*. Now they which intend to deceive, appear moſt exactly in the Form, and with the outward Marks, if need require: and that which is true and ſubſtantial, is not ſo regardful of the outward form,

but

but minds the inward life, truth and ſubſtance. He therefore that judges by the form and outward marks, cannot but judge that to be the true Spouſe which appears moſt in the form, and with the outward marks, and ſo is very liable to be deceived and err, by judging ſome of the falſe Churches to be true, and the true to be falſe.

Qu. *What am I to do when I know the true Church?*

Anſ. To wait in that, which gives to be a Member of it, and gives true Union with it, whether it be in its Wilderneſs-ſtate, or in its built-ſtate. For the ſame Spirit which begets the Child in the true life, will alſo lead to the Church: and in that Wiſdom which is from above, the true Church will never be miſſed of; but in the earthly reaſonings and gueſſings of mans wiſdom, God's Church, (or New-Teſtament-building in the power of his Spirit) is eaſily miſſed. And he that miſſeth of this, and is out of the pale of it, is it poſſible he ſhould meet with the true ſalvation? He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear; and he that hath

but ſo much as the heart of a man; let him conſider: For the thing is of great weight, and of deep concernment to the ſoul.

Well, have but patience a while, and the true Church (which God's Spirit builds) ſhall be known, and all the falſe Churches of mens building ſhall be known alſo. And that which God hath built, ſhall have the power from God, and the praiſe among men; and all the *Babyloniſh* buildings, of mans confuſed ſpirit, and inconſiſtent wiſdom, ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke, and become a ſtink in all Noſtrils. For ſtrong is the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, who is confounding *Babylon* in all her gaudy attire, and glorious appearances, and raiſing up his *Sion* out of the duſt. *Amen. Halelujah.*

Some further Queſtions and Anſwers concerning the Seed of Iſrael.

Queſt. *OUt of what womb doth the Seed of* Iſrael *ſpring?*

Anſ. Out of the Nature of Eternal Life, out of the Boſom of Eternal Love; out of the *Jeruſalem* which is above, which is free, and the Mother of all that are born of the Spirit.

Qu. *By what Covenant are the Children of* Iſrael *brought* up?

Anſ. By the Covenant of Faith in the love of the Father, which gives life and ſtrength to obey.

Queſt. *Is there obedience required in the New-Covenant?*

Anſ. Yes, the obedience of Faith: the ſubjection of the nature and heart

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of the child to the nature and will of the Father, which is as fully natural in the ſubſtance, as it can be repreſented in any figure or ſhadow.

Queſt. *What if there be diſobedience?*

Anſ. The Seed it ſelf cannot diſobey: but the Veſſel in which it is ſown, and to which it is united, may prove weak, frail, brittle, yea ſometimes ſtubborn; the weight and chaſtiſement whereof the Seed alſo bears, and in patient ſuffering helps and cleanſes the Veſſel through the virtue of the blood of Jeſus, which is felt in the Seed which comes from Jeſus. And here is the blood of ſprinkling known in the ſoul, which cleanſes the Conſcience from dead works, and waſhes away the iniquity thereof.

Queſt. *Can any fall from this Covenant?*

Anſ. The Covenant is with the Seed for ever, and with the Seeds ſeed alſo is it firm; but the ſtreamings forth of the Light of the Covenant do not alwayes beget a Seed, but onely ſometimes ſet mans nature on work, drawing forth the faith, love and obedience thereof.

thereof. Now this will not hold. All flesh is grass, and at one time or other will fade and wither: but there must be a being begotten of the word, to live and abide for ever.

Qu. How is this begetting?

Anſ. In the weakening of man's ſtrength day by day, and raiſing up the ſeed, which ſeed gives life and ſtrength to him that is weakened in the manhood.

Qu. *How is this done?*

Anſ. Firſt by drawing forth what is in the man, and then by trying its ſtrength, diſtreſsing the man with exerciſes beyond him. Thus the working man is brought down by the requirings of the Law, they being too hard for him, and the believing Seed is raiſed up, who in the virtue of the living faith (whereof he receiveth ſupplies from the breath of eternal Life) fulfils the righteouſneſs of the Law in the man, and alſo communicates a righteouſneſs of an higher nature unto him.

Qu. Why doth God take this courſe with man?

Anſ. It is proper and natural. How can

can an higher Principle be raised in man, but by the death of the former? And how can the former dye, but by such exercises, trials and distresses as are proper to wear out the strength of its nature, and bring it into the nothingness, where that which is, springs up; when it hath brought down that which appeared, but was not?

O who can understand God's works in the world? who can read the mysterie of Life and Death in man? O what a worm is man before his God? What is his nature? In what state is he able to walk with his God? God can keep covenant with man in any kind of dispensation; but man still fails; his heart deceives him, and he is not able to attain unto, or maintain any considerable proportion of happiness to his soul by his covenant?

Qu. *What is man's Covenant?*

Ans. That which his nature desires of God to make him happy. That Light, that Counsel, that Strength, that Presence which his nature thinks sufficient, will not carry him through. Nay, let God shew Grace and Mercy, and

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add helps unto him in the riches of his love, yet this will not do. How doth man fall in every diſpenſation, where there is any ſtreſs laid on this Covenant, though God is able to be a Father and an husband therein!

Qu. *What is God's Covenant?*

Anſ. That which his nature ſees needful to make man happy in him, and to keep man in the enjoiment of his happineſs. This, ſo far as it is diſpenſed, carries through; and when it is diſpenſed perfectly, will bring forth the perfect redemption and happineſs of the creature.

Now then that ſoul that would travel towards life eternal:

Firſt, Wait to feel a principle of life awakened, raiſed up, ſowen in thy earth by the living God.

2*ly*. Wait to receive all the Light of Life in every kind, that the Father of Lights ſhal pleaſe to cauſe to ſhine in thy heart, from this principle.

3*ly*. Be content to be tried and diſtreſſed, and have thy ſtrength broken day by day, and thy wiſdom confounded, that thou maiſt ſink into and paſs away

way in the weakneſs and fooliſhneſs which the Lord will bring upon thee before the wiſdom and ſtrength of his life appear in thee.

4ly. Keep thine eye and heart on the grace that firſt viſited thee, that there thy footing may be, and thy hope faſtned. O receive the Light ſtill from the hand of grace, and look up thither for ſtrength to obey the Light, that the earthly man get not a life in the obedience, and thou forget the grace, and thy need of Chriſt the annointed of the Lord; and ſo thou live on what thou haſt received from God, and not Chriſt live in thee, and look upon thy working obedience as the righteouſneſs, and feel not the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is the free juſtification of his life and power, waſhing away the guilt of the ungodly.

Ah narrow is the path that leads unto life, none can enter in at it, but the ſeed, and the ſeeds ſeed, even that which dies in the creaturehip, in the principle which *Adam* received from the Lord, and ſprings up in the nature and being of this ſeed. Read this, O travellers towards the

Holy

Holy Land, with the eye which God creates, that ye may run certainly in his begettings, in his creatings, in his leadings towards his land of eternal rest, even in the certain law and power of his endless life, and not in the uncertain reasonings, imaginings, and gueſſings at things by the humane underſtanding.

THE END